

Next Generation Accountability Work Group

Sept. 14-15, 2011

Welcome by Dr. Rick Melmer, facilitator, and Dr. Melody Schopp, secretary of education

Members present: Rep. Jacqueline Sly, Pam Homan, Tim Mitchell, Margo Heinert, Mike Hanson, Darrell Mueller, Curt Voight, Gregg Talcott, Kevin Nelson, Chris Schultz, Kyley Cumbow, Becky Guffin, Lyn Heidenson, Susan Turnipseed, Nicole Keegan, Sharla Steever, Terri McLellan (for Cherie Farlee), Julie Mathiesen, Laura Haug (for Sandy Arsenault), Wade Pogany, Paul Turman

Exercise to identify likes and dislikes of current accountability system

Themes for “likes”: Public accountability, use of data and disaggregated data to improve instruction, participation for all students, fresh challenge, minimum bar, promoted conversations among staff

Themes for “dislikes”: No growth model, everybody has to finish race at same time but don’t start at same place, tough for certain subgroups – especially special education, devaluation of individual children, one size fits all does not work, one-shot testing, should be different expectations for different students, stigma associated with “school improvement”, more pressure on students to perform

Additional points of conversation from this exercise:

- More information was good
- One size does not fit all
- Lack of a growth model
- Issues with special education students and how to address those
- Reporting of special education students was not fair, not measuring appropriately
- Certain comparisons not fair (smaller schools vs. larger schools and how held accountable)
- Results misapplied to policy decisions
- Has pitted schools against each other – even within districts
- Question about N size – should it be 10, rather than 25?
- Complexity of NCLB system
- Kids who are advanced are hardly growing at all –all focus is on basic to proficient
- What happens from 8th grade to junior year? Struggle with that gap.
- Focus so much on reading and math; not serving kids who have talents in other areas
- Taking the love of learning out
- Opportunity to look at more college and career ready indicators, rather than junior-level test

Review of current state accountability system

Conversation following:

- Does department have flexibility to decide when it wants to test?
- Classroom teachers feeling pressure related to timing of test.
- Administrators would rather see testing later in the year, same year.
- Issues with the four-year cohort graduation rate

Presentation by Kirsten Taylor, Council of Chief State School Officers

- Talked about CCSSO’s nine principles from next-generation accountability
- Roadmap serves as resource for states – how do we shape the conversation as a state?
- Not abandoning accountability, finding a better way to do it

Conversation following:

- Need strong messaging related to why we are doing this work; that it is a move to a better system
- We are not watering down accountability.

Discussion of CCSSO's 9 principles for accountability

1) Performance objectives aligned to the goal of college and career readiness

How do we currently determine if college and career ready?

- ACT is one way – aligning their scores with performance in certain college courses. Advanced on Dakota STEP would also indicate college ready – we don't use it right now but we could.
- The flat score on reading and math does not define college and career ready. There is so much more.
- At some point, we have to come up with metrics. However, we don't always have clear metrics to use.
- At college level, we look at multiple factors: ACT, grade point average, etc.
- Could you look at skill sets based on what the student is interested in?
- Finite score vs. what students are doing in project-based learning environment. A new model should embrace not just the test score that we're comfortable with but something else.
- Changes probably have to include postsecondary and on down.
- Basic skills should not be our aim for instruction. Test for some basic content. But in other ways in the system, we encourage other areas like collaboration, etc.
- Recently, tech schools have made steps to allow some SPED kids to attend postsecondary. More frequently, our goal may be just helping these students find employment. Lot of existing models don't think about those students.
- The test is not the magic bullet. There have to be broader measures than just test scores.

What might those broader measures be?

ASVAB – military entrance exam

AP or dual credit courses

Project-based learning/senior experiences/internships – capstone experiences

GPA

Attendance

Qualitative information rather than quantitative

How we measure with SPED kids is their IEP – transition plan

Gates millennium scholarship process

ACT

SAT

Compass

Technology certificate

High school diploma

End of course exams

Work Keys (workforce credential that Department of Labor issues)

State test/Dakota STEP

Points of growth within some/each of these areas

Graduation rate

CTE cluster completion

GED

Discipline record

WIDA Access

Testing at a grade other than 11th grade (maybe 9th grade), or using some other measure such as ACT

2) Valid measures focused on student performance outcomes

- Multiple measures noted above, at least for high school level
- Using measures frequently/monitoring frequently – can see incremental growth
- Growth in one year – from fall to spring , or fall to winter to spring
- Some doing this now with AIMS Web
- Growth model – every child needs to grow at least a year
- K-3 is all about skills; 4-12 is all about content. Skills can be measured easily. To assess content is more difficult. Push for individual student growth
- Questions surrounding whether we pass students who are not making it along, or hold them back
- Point is: Formative assessment has a place here
- Can we re-do school? Can we re-think school completely?

3) Determinations that distinguish school and district performance

- One year's growth per student
- Status and growth options
- Gap closure
- Moving quartiles of students (bottom and/or top)
- Differentiation of N-size per district
- Hitting on a certain percentage of cells
- Ratio of time spent in the district or in building should be considered
- Classification
- More than one measure for determining distinguished schools
- Rolling average for distinguished school/have to do it for average of 3 years

4) Transparent reporting of determinations

- For teachers, it would be good to have current year data as we make placements for the following year
- Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium – formative piece and spring summative – SY 2014-15
- Some states using assessment money now to work on the infrastructure related to future testing
- As SD moves to Common Core, there is some question about the transition period. How will we perform as a state when we're teaching to Common Core but testing on Dakota STEP?
- Don't overwhelm stake holders with data
- Could parents tap into LDS through an Infinite Campus interface?
- Assessment and accountability template that schools use right now (from the state) is cumbersome. Could items be preloaded?
- Per federal requirements, the stuff that we send out does not make sense – the individual student data is ok but not all the school AYP status, school choice, etc.
- We need dashboard reporting
- Determine what data is essential for state to have to make decisions
- Data needs to be pertinent, timely
- Releasing Dakota STEP results at the time we do does not help anyone
- New writing assessment is a model for timely data

5) Diagnostic reviews to ensure analysis of school and district performance

- Whole system is geared to what's wrong – can we change that mindset to focus on what's right
- Need to be focused on actionable items
- Currently, diagnostic reviews are too broad. Where can we get the most efficiency for our efforts?
- Support districts to constantly work on instruction, assessment and feedback – and sometimes focus on the exemplars – build on capacity
- Too focused on the negative; need to build on capacity
- School improvement process needs to be streamlined
- Focus on improvement, not punitive
- Audit tool is not effective; we have done it, but we're still in "improvement" – it all goes back to instruction
- Tool diagnoses the wrong thing -- every district should pick one or two things and hit those relentlessly
- Take away: Review our diagnostic review process – more coordinated, more useful for schools
- Disconnect between what audit requires and practical use of what's in the audit

Conversation about Dakota STEP vs. ACT and the alignment between them, entrance into state university system. (Paul Turman presentation)

- There is time in high school to do some remediation and/or college preparation (several mentions of the senior year)
- If it takes college students six years to get through, then let's not expect high school students to complete in four years
- Dual credit options, AP and CLEP are huge in terms of getting students through college more quickly than the average

6) Classification that direct rewards, support and interventions

- In current system, the Distinguished designation is not meaningful
- Might have to be differentiations due to size of the school population
- Balance of indicators
- Status lense and a growth lense
- Spend time on how we create these labels – the notion of career/college readiness gives us opportunity to change our language (example: "prepared" might be a term)
- Should have an opportunity to celebrate with the groups that we have
- Everyone in the game with the same rules
- Some combination of status and growth
- Need to be able to measure growth within a year's time

What should a distinguished school/district look like?

High growth

High status

Persistently hard-working students – that's who we need to celebrate

What districts should be on the low end?

Those showing no growth

Those not making status

7) Support and interventions reinforce school and district efforts

- If the model itself is different, that is a start
- Resources available to schools – targeted assistance, professional development, financial
- If there is an audit, one or two items to focus on -- particularly focused on instruction/ very specific
- Just adding one more new thing/new trend is not the answer
- Teacher quality is a challenge in some areas (geographic areas)
- Respecting what school/district is already doing – also get things down to teacher level
- Recognizing the existing power of teachers -- then share the exemplars so can be replicated throughout the entire state
- Part of the issue is education funding, people maybe not going into the field because of cuts
- Part of the issue is that people may not want to live in certain geographic areas

8) Commitment to innovations, evaluation and continuous improvement of system

- High expectations but honor the different pathways as to how we get there
- Instead of grade level assessment, assess on smaller chunks before moving on – then take those concepts to project-based learning situation
- We do this in a way with OdesseyWare
- The more indicators a school has, they should get some sort of leeway (percentage approach?)
- Testing of ELL and SPED students
- Can we use existing data we have on SPED students, rather than Dakota STEP? Do they really need one more assessment?
- Decision for state to decide at what point and where we test ELL and SPED students -- access students at their achievement level rather than chronological level

Exercise: Instead of ..., we should do ...

- Instead of one measure, multiple measures and don't have to hit 100%
- Standards over grade levels
- Close the gap between grades 8 and 11
- Instead of grade level assessment, assess strands of concepts as they are mastered
- Move from summative to formative assessments
- Instead of student status driven by subcategories, look at gains
- Testing of 9th and 10th grade for intervention but also for more rigorous opportunities
- Use data not to identify/classify/punish, use system to build capacity
- Using multiple optional approaches
- Fewer interventions with fidelity
- Using growth as part of distinguished
- Reward growth
- Multiple means
- Use existing year's data, rather than previous years
- Replicate good things, not punitive
- Move quickly to web-based testing as a state
- Instead of one summative, one formative in fall and spring
- Instead of accountability, we should be looking at assessment
- Multiple assessments

9) Teacher quality

Background: Current system is based on having a bachelor's degree, state certification, content certified
– Praxis test

- Is the term "highly qualified" accurate? Isn't it just "qualified?"
- What should measuring teacher quality look like?
- Teachers should be assessed by multiple measures
- Tiered system for teachers to have different recognition of their skills. Right now, a teacher's only option to move up is to go into administration. Could we have master teachers?
- Classroom effectiveness needs to be addressed. Growth model would help to address that – should expect at least a year's growth for each student
- PE teachers, etc. are harder to recognize
- Somehow it has to be not just individual teachers, but school as a team
- Have to go beyond the classroom, communicating with parents, working collaboratively, etc.
- Danielson Framework has some ability to define effectiveness
- Need to look at the alternative certification process
- Continual feedback, collaboration and team building

Closing

What else does this group need for information/resources?

Information re: longitudinal data system

Growth model examples

Other states mentioned: Delaware, Colorado, Massachusetts

Dakota STEP and ACT connections

Technical Institutes need to be involved – readiness aspect

What growth made since last Governor's Task Force (under Gov. Janklow)?

Models from other states, particular value-added systems (Houston, TX mentioned)

SD Incentives+ schools here in SD as example

Bush grant experience with evaluating teachers

Customized learning – what is it? Could Julie Mathiesen do presentation to this group?

Update on state's status on the Danielson Framework

Composite score – to get teachers in other areas such as music or art involved in the evaluation

Any examples out there of what defines college and career readiness

Next Meeting

Oct. 26-27 in Pierre